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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study reported here was to determine how many inner city school newspapers had folded in recent years and why they ceased publishing. A random sample of 267 or 25% of the total large central metropolitan (inner city) secondary schools was generated. Principals of 149 such schools replied to the simple, one-page questionnaire. Results indicated that: (1) 85% of the schools published a newspaper; (2) most of the schools that stopped publishing their newspapers did so between 1988 and 1993; (3) lack of funds for production costs was the most frequent reason given for stopping publication; and (4) inner city schools published their newspapers much less frequently than high schools across the nation. The most alarming concern is whether the trend of the last 5 years will continue over the next 5 years, resulting in another 135 or more newspapers ceasing to publish by the end of that time. Several models are available for helping newspapers and universities to become involved with inner city schools in their areas. Findings suggest that, while there are real problems and some alarming trends, the student newspaper is still alive in 85% of the nation's inner city schools. (Seven tables of data and 41 notes are included; an appendix of data, and the survey instrument are attached. Contains 32 references.) (RS)

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INNER CITY HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS: AN OBITUARY?

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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A paper presented to the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the annual convention in Kansas City, MO, in August of 1993.

INNER CITY HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPERS: AN OBITUARY?

Twice in the last month reporters have asked the same question. Both times this author did not know the answer. The reporters were writing about the problems facing high school journalism today. Both wanted to know if anyone had done any research on how many inner city schools had stopped publishing newspapers in recent years. While this author couldn't give them any figures, she could share the following few "war stories" collected over the years.

- A few years ago during a summer journalism workshop, she heard an aging journalism professor reminiscing in glowing terms about his years as a high school journalist in an all-white inner city St. Louis high school. Later that same afternoon he was shocked to learn from a young African American woman who was a student at that very high school that the school newspaper had folded many years before. At the request of one of her English teachers, she was attending the workshop to acquire the skills she would need to help try to revive the paper.

- Two summers ago at a workshop for teachers, Earlene Hollinger, an African American broadcast journalism teacher from a school in Montgomery, Alabama, told a similar story. She said her school no longer published a newspaper because of budgetary and staffing problems. During the workshop she was inspired to go back and revive the school paper. She had to make a case with the school administration and volunteer to advise the paper after school in addition to her other duties, but she got the job done.[1]

- This winter, she ran across an essay by Sheila Acosta, a journalism teacher who has taught for 14 years in inner city schools. She said "I am seeing inner city high schools today shut down journalism departments because of district budget cuts and degree requirements. At Jefferson High School, in San Antonio, Texas, where I now teach and have for the last 11 years, my journalism program is a sign of stability and encouragement for hundreds of students who have no direction in their lives. Because I have only taught journalism in

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[1]Earlene Hollinger, Letter to author, dated June, 1992. See also "After Six-Year Lapse, Alabama school revives paper," *Trends in High School Media* 71: no. 2 (December, 1991) 1.

> inner city schools, I have learned to compensate for those things that come so easily to richer districts. I know that the subject matter I teach my students can easily be learned on the job as a journalist, but what I am offering to my students is the opportunity become involved, find direction and reach for the future."[2]

Besides these "war stories," this author told the reporters about a collaborative of high school teachers and representatives from scholastic and professional journalism organizations and several universities that is trying to do something to revive journalism in inner city schools. Steve O'Donoghue, head of the collaborative and chair of the Journalism Education Association Multicultural Commission, has set working with inner city schools as his top priority. O'Donoghue, who is the newspaper adviser at an inner city school in Oakland, CA, says that the proposed collaborative will target urban districts with large minority populations. The schools in these districts have wide variation of enrollment. "Some are close to 100 percent minority while others are 100 percent white," O'Donoghue said, "but we're looking at the overall needs o the district's youth, not those of a specific school."

O'Donoghue says some inner city schools still do publish newspapers. However, even when schools have newspapers, he says, "Too often they are poor examples of what students are capable of doing." Because the collaborative is still seeking funding for its projects, little progress has been made toward its goal.[3]

After each reporter thanked this author for the information, each

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[2]Sheila Acosta, Application Essay for Journalism Education Association Outreach Program, August, 1992.

[3]Robert Greenman, "Collaborative Undertakes Major Initiative to Revive Journalism Programs," *Adviser Update* 32: no. 4 (Winter 1991-1992) 4-5.

said he really wanted research or "statistics" so he could "know for sure" if school newspapers are dying in inner city schools, and – if they are – why? This author told each reporter that she doubted if anyone had researched that exact question. After this author got off the phone from talking to the second reporter, she vowed not to get caught again. She decided to find out how many inner city school newspapers have died in recent years – and why they have folded.

WHY ARE THESE HIGH SCHOOLS IMPORTANT?

Inner city schools compose just seven percent of the total public schools, but close to 12 percent of the total school population.[4] However, there are very significant differences between this 12 percent and the rest of the population. A great deal of information is available about the problems inner city youth must contend with each day such as poverty, violence, dropping out of school, unemployment and crime.[5] Because this study began in response to questions from newspaper reporters, the author chose to focus on one aspect of inner city schools that is an important issue in the newspaper business. In no way does the author intend to suggest that the many problems of inner city youth are not equally – if not more – important. However, because the newspaper business has spent a great deal of time and money trying to attract people of color, this paper focuses on the reality that the

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[4]Information derived from a data base obtained from The National Data Resource Center, U.S. Department of Education for the 1990-91 school year.

[5]For recent information on the problems faced by inner city youth see: Cheryl McCortie, "Mentoring Young Achievers," *Black Enterprise* 21 (June 1991):336-8; "Educating Tomorrow's Employees: Inner City Workers and Students," *Personnel* 67 (March 1990):4; and Marc Hequet, "Blight Busters: Training for Inner City Residents," *Training* 29 (September 1992): 30-4.

majority of the students in inner city schools are people of color and the significance this has for newspaper journalism rather than on the role journalism can play in solving the problems inner city youth face each day.

Table 1 compares the national percentage of various racial and ethnic groups of students in high schools in the United States:

Table 1: Comparison of the Percentage of Racial and Ethnic Groups Nationally with those in Inner City Schools:

Group	*National %*	*Inner City %*
White American	76	30
African American	12	36
Hispanic/Latino	8	26
Asian American	2	7
American Indian	1	0.41

Source: US Department of Education Data, 1990-1991

According to a 1991 national study conducted by Jack Dvorak at Indiana University, 23.6 percent in the total school population are "minority" students.[6] However, a look at the population of people of color in inner city schools, reveals that 83 percent have an average population of students of color above 23.6 percent. Over 72 percent of the schools have greater than 50 percent "minority" students. A full 39 percent of the schools have "minority" populations of over 90 percent.[7] Obviously, in the inner city schools, the "minority" is the "majority."

Journalists and journalism educators are particularly interested in these students because people of color are under-represented in

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[6]Jack Dvorak, "Research Report: Secondary School Journalism in the United States," *Indiana High School Journalism Institute Insight* (April, 1992) 3.

[7]Information derived from a data base obtained from The National Data Resource Center, U.S. Department of Education for the 1990-91 school year.

college journalism classrooms and the nation's newsrooms. While "minorities" make up 23 percent of the population, fewer than 9 percent of newspaper journalists are people of color. More than half of America's daily papers have no people of color on their staff, and most of those have never had a person of color on their staffs.[8]

David Lawrence, American Society of Newspaper Editors former president, has said, "We have a multicultural country, and we simply must have newspapers with fully pluralistic staffs and management; without that we simply will not be a mass medium."

To achieve multicultural staffs, Walterene Swanston, director of the National Association of Black Journalists, says, "We can no longer wait for people to be of college age to get them interested. The earlier you start 'growing your own,' the more likely you are to attract and keep them in the business."[9]

Poynter Institute for Media Studies personnel echo the same sentiments. The subhead of their brochure describing their writers' camp for high school students says "Find them young. Give they what they need. Don't let go." Another Poynter publication says newspapers that succeed in interesting young people of color in newspaper careers work from a broad base of support for elementary and secondary education in their communities.[10]

Newspapers are not just interested in young people as prospective employees. These same young people are also the newspaper readers of

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[8]"The Next Step Toward Diversity in the Newspaper Business," booklet by American Newspaper Publishers Association Foundation and The Poynter Institute for Media Studies, 1991. page 4.

[9]Greenman, page 5.

[10]Next Step. page 24, 26.

tomorrow. The Task Force on Minorities in the Newspaper Business addressed the importance of these young readers:

> As the population ages, newspapers must attract younger readers. Minority populations are growing most rapidly and are also younger. They also are becoming a larger portion of the total under 35-year-old population. Older readers will have to be replaced by new generations of readers in the coming decades. Unless newspapers become a vital part of the lives of young readers, the future of newspapers is in jeopardy.[11]

Newspapers are interested in increasing the readership among all high school students. Therefore, newspapers naturally look to high school newspapers as a place that can provide one of the first opportunities for students to become regular newspaper readers.

Because of the high proportion of students of color in the inner city schools, it is also natural that, when newspaper personnel are interested in recruiting people of color for journalism careers and increasing overall readership, they look to the inner city schools. That's one of the reasons why reporters are interested in what is happening to journalism programs in the nation's inner city schools. If the newspaper business is going to "grow their own" staffers and readers, as Walt Swanston said, then the student newspapers of inner city schools are an important field to cultivate. The same is true of college and universities who are seeking to increase the students of color in their journalism programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A quick check of the research on high school newspapers shows that no one has addressed how many inner city school newspapers have died in

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[11]"Cornerstone for Growth: How Minorities are Vital to the Future of Newspapers," booklet created by the Task Force on Minorities in the Newspaper Business, 1990, page 7.

recent years and why. There are many studies on high school journalism that focus on such issues as adviser attitudes, the training and recruiting of minority students, First Amendment and ethical issues, financing student newspapers, and the talents, joys and woes of high school journalism students but no research on the plight of the inner city school newspaper. In the scholarly journals, there is one article in *Journalism Quarterly* that talks about the educational and career aspirations of high school students of color[12] and one in *Journalism Educator* on recruiting college minority students that mentions working with high school programs.[13] However, neither addresses inner city high school newspapers.

A search of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) data base reveals no articles on inner city student newspapers. Articles on student newspapers included in the ERIC data base focus on: legal issues such as censorship, staff management and diversity strategies, desktop publishing, improving writing and other content, and the place of the student newspaper in the school curriculum.[14]

By expanding the search to include the newspaper "trade magazines" one article in *Editor and Publisher* surfaces. It tells of a 93-year-old San Francisco high school newspaper that was in danger of closing down

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[12]Judee K. Burgoon, Michael Burgoon, David B. Buller, Ray Coker and Deborah Coker, "Minorities and Journalism: Career Orientations Among High School Students," *Journalism Quarterly*, 64, no. 2-3 (Summer-Autumn, 1987) 434-43.

[13]Carolyn Martindale, "Recruiting Minority Students with Limited Resources," *Journalism Educator*, 45, no 1 (Spring, 1990), 71-77.

[14]A computer search of the Educational Resources Information Center data base from 1982 to 1992 revealed 45 articles that dealt with "student newspapers." No articles were found that included the key words "inner city" and "student newspapers."

due to budget cuts.[15] The paper's financial problem was not the cost of publishing; it was the layoff notice given to the adviser, one of 500 San Francisco teachers who received dismissal notices from the district.

While the article doesn't say so, the school, Lowell High School is an inner city school with a minority population of .81 percent - primarily Asian Americans.[16] Instead, the article stresses the school's high academic rating and includes a list of former staffers who have either become famous or have gone on to become journalists - none of whom are Asian Americans.

Expanding the search to include the last 10 years on the NEXIS data base revealed two newspaper articles, one from Dallas and one from Los Angeles. The October 1992, Dallas *Morning News* article by Larry Beliberg gave reasons why the South Oak Cliff High School and other inner city student newspapers "went out of business." These were:

- Too few students take the newspaper course because graduation requirements and school reforms that limit student electives.
- The papers were victims of budget cuts.
- Since the paper came out as infrequently as once or twice a year, the information was not news, so no one read it.
- The lack of administrative support for the newspaper.[17]

Two years ago, in November of 1990, The Los Angeles *Times* ran an article by Hector Tobar about the Hamilton High School newspaper in West Los Angeles that had folded that fall. The reasons given for the demise

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[15]"93-year-old Newspaper in Jeopardy," *Editor and Publisher*, 124 (May 11, 1991) 20.

[16]Information derived from a data base obtained from The National Data Resource Center, U.S. Department of Education for the 1990-91 school year.

[17]Larry Beliberg, "Fading Print: School Newspapers Fold as Journalism Students Dwindle," *The Dallas Morning News* (October 13, 1992) 30A.

of this paper and the decline of inner city high school journalism in general were pretty much the same:

- The lack of student interest.
- The decline in the amount of reading students do.
- The papers came out so infrequently that no one cared.
- Year-round schedules meant that the student staffers were missing for months at a time.
- The papers were always "in the red."
- No teachers were willing to advise the publications.

Tobar agreed with Steve O'Donoghue's contention that even when inner city schools keep their newspapers, the publications are often of poor quality.[18] Citing the decline in frequency of publication as one piece of evidence for the decline of inner city high school newspapers, Tobar said:

> A generation ago, nearly every Los Angeles-area high school produced a weekly newspaper. Now only a handful of weeklies survives among the 49 high schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. In New York City, most of the high school "newspapers" are actually quarterly newsletters.[19]

The phone calls from the reporters and literature review provided the questions and a list of possible answers for the questionnaire. All that was required to frame the study was to select a method that could test those questions and answers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Due to a limit on time and funds available, a quick and inexpensive way of answering the question was selected. A mail survey

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[18]Greenman, page 4.

[19]Hector Tobar, "Budget Cuts and Apathy Help Fold Newspapers at Many High Schools in West Los Angeles, The Federalist Died Quietly this Fall," *The Los Angeles Times* (November 29, 1990) 1B.

is a relatively inexpensive research tool that requires a minimum of time and effort to reach the widest range of respondents. The greatest drawback of mail surveys is that response rates to mail questionnaires usually don't reach 50 percent, and intensive follow-up efforts are required to increase returns.[20] By following the questionnaire up with telephone calls to nonrespondents, we were able to reach an acceptable response rate for the question of how many inner city school newspapers have folded in recent years.

A data base of all public secondary schools from 1990-91 school year was obtained from the National Data Resource center of the United States Department of Education Office of Educational Research and Improvement. The data base included following information: the schools, their addresses and phone numbers, the enrollment by grade, the type of school and locale, breakouts of minority students, and full time equivalents of classroom teachers.

All schools were classified as one of the following locations:

1. Large Central City
2. Mid-size Central City
3. Urban Fringe of a Large City
4. Urban Fringe of a Mid-size City
5. Large Town
6. Small Town
7. Rural

Location 1 is defined as "central cities with a population greater than or equal to 400,000 or a population density greater than or equal to 6,000 persons per square mile."[21] Large central metropolitan (or inner city) schools make up 1,069 out of 15,676 public schools in the

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[20]Delbert C. Miller, *Handbook of Research Design and Social Measurement* (New York: Longman, 1983) 98.

[21]"Data Base Documentation Form" defining the variables and their codes. National Data Resource Center, U.S. Department of Education.

nation. The total population for inner city schools is 914,602 out of 7,872,810 total school population.

The number and percentage of each type of school in the large central metropolitan schools are presented on Table 2:

Table 2: Numbers and Percentages of Schools by Type in Large Central Metropolitan Schools

Type of School	*% Total*	*N Schools*
1. Regular school	89	952
2. Special education school	2	19
3. Vocational school	5	56
4. Other/alternative school	4	42

Source: US Department of Education Data, 1990-1991

A random sample of 267 or 25 percent of the total large central metropolitan (inner city) schools was generated. By using a skip interval of four with a random starting point a systemic sampling technique was employed.[22] All four types of schools were included.

QUESTIONNAIRE:

A simple, one-page, five-question questionnaire was mailed to the principals at the high schools on Feb. 5, 1993. A cover letter and self-addressed business return envelope were included with the questionnaire.[23] Follow up phone calls were made at random to nonrespondents until the response rate reached 50 percent or 134 responses. Since 120 questionnaires were returned, only 14 phone calls were made. An additional 15 questionnaires were returned after April 1 deadline for this paper. These questionnaires, which bring the response rate up to 56 percent, have been included in this revised paper.

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[22]Miller, page 63.

[23]Copies of both the letter and questionnaire are found in the appendices to this paper.

The questionnaire was purposefully limited in length because it was assumed that principals are very busy and are likely to put aside anything that would take more than a minute or two to complete. It was hoped that keeping the questionnaire as short as possible would increase the likelihood that the principal would immediately complete and return the questionnaire.

The five items on the questionnaire came from the literature review. Principals were asked if their school publishes a newspaper, had ever published one, why it stopped (if it had), and how often the paper is (or was) published. The first two questions were screen questions that directed respondents to skip one or more questions depending on the answer provided.[24] The third question asked when the papers (that had) had folded.

The "reasons" or choices that were included in the fourth question came from the "war stories" and magazine and newspaper articles. This question about reasons the papers had folded was a partially-closed question that also included the option of "other" and asked respondents to explain.[25]

The fifth question asked about frequency of publication. An unnumbered, final, open-ended question was included to allow principals to suggest other reasons and reflect on or clarify their school's position concerning maintaining or eliminating the student newspaper.[26]

Respondents were also given the option of requesting a research

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[24]Dillman, page 144.

[25]Don A. Dillman, *Mail and Telephone Surveys* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978) 93.

[26]Dillman, page 87.

summary to be sent to the principal or the school newspaper adviser when the study was completed. This option is provided to reward respondents by providing them with information they value.[27]

RESULTS/DISCUSSION:

A total of 135 questionnaires were returned by mail. In addition, 14 follow up calls were made to randomly selected nonrespondents bringing the response rate up to 56 percent or 149 respondents. A response rate of 50 percent is generally accepted as adequate for analysis and reporting.[28] Geographic locations of respondents mirror the locations of all inner city schools. (See the table found in the appendix to this paper.)

The survey responses found in Table 3 reveal the numbers and percentages of schools that publish papers as well as those are no longer publishing papers or have never published one.

Table 3: How Many Schools Publish a School Newspaper?

#	*Question*	*Yes*	*% Yes*	*No*	*% No*	
1.	Publish a paper?	127	85	22	15	N=149
2.	Ever Publish one?	19	13	3	2	N=22[29]

For comparing the responses to the rest of the questions, a subgroup of respondents was created from the answers given to the first two questions. Those who responded "no" to Question 1 and "yes" to Question 2 were grouped and labeled "Stopped Publishing" on the tables that follow.

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[27]Dillman, page 171.

[28]Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research: 3rd Edition* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1983) 226.

[29]Those who answered "yes" to Question 1 were told to skip Question 2.

It is important to note that the three schools who responded "no" to both of the first two questions, were included in the "All Schools" responses. They were not part of the "Stopped Publishing" subgroup because they have never published a newspaper and, therefore, could not represent any sort of recent "trend" or phenomenon. For comparison purposes an "All Schools" category is included on the tables that follow. Including these numbers helps to keep in proper perspective the number of inner city schools that have stopped publishing in relation to all the inner city schools.

The "Stopped Publishing" subgroup includes inner city high schools that are the primary target for this study - 19 schools that have stopped publishing their student newspapers. When the results of this study are generalized to the whole population of inner city schools, almost 13 percent of all inner city schools - about one in eight - or approximately 135 schools have stopped publishing newspapers.

The schools that have stopped publishing are similar in type, enrollment, and minority population to the figures for all inner city schools. Sixteen (84 percent) are regular schools, two are vocational schools, and one is an alternative school. The average enrollment of 860 students in grades 10-12 is very close to the average enrollment of 855 for all inner city schools. Minority population in these schools is at an average of 88 percent. No one part of the country has been hardest hit. Four schools from New York and four from California are included. The rest are in Texas, Illinois, Georgia, Maryland and Louisiana.

The figures on Table 4 below demonstrate the most alarming aspect of the current study. Most of the schools that have stopped publishing

their newspapers have done so in the last five years. A follow up study will determine if this trend will in the next five years or whether the number of newspapers will stabilize at the current level or even bounce back to the level of five years ago.

Table 4: When did Schools Stop Publishing the Newspaper?

Response	*N Yes*	*All Schools % Yes*	*Stopped Publ* % Yes*
In the last 5 years	17	11	89
5 to 10 years ago	2	2	11
		N=149	N=19

**Does not include those schools that have never published a school newspaper.*

Table 5 presents the frequencies that the various reasons for the demise of the newspapers were given. Lack funds for production costs was the most frequent response. Three reasons – lack of faculty interest, financing for the faculty adviser's salary and increased graduation requirements – tied for the second most frequent. Lack of student interest was also a factor at several schools.

Table 5: Why did Schools Stop Publishing the Newspaper?

*Reasons**	*N Yes*	*All Schools % Yes*	*Stopped Publ* % Yes*
Little student interest	5	3	26
Graduation requirements	8	5	42
No qualified faculty	1	1	5
No interested faculty	8	5	42
No funds for adviser salary	8	5	42
No funds for production	10	8	52
		N=149	N=19

Schools were able to check more than one reason.

It is not the purpose of this paper to provide an extensive discussion for each of the reasons why schools have shut down their papers. Other writers and researchers have already dealt with most of these issues at length. For instance, one innovative and creative way to generate student interest in an inner city school is discussed in Micala McMurrian's "Mo' Better Blues: A Case Study in Building Minority

Participation in High School Publications."[30] Other articles giving strategies for reviving or building student interest are included in *Breakthrough: A Multicultural Guide to High School Journalism,*[31] the Fall 1992 *Communication: Journalism Education Today* issue devoted to "Facing the Challenge of Diversity,"[32] and two articles in the December-January, 1993, issue of *Quill & Scroll* magazine.[33]

A great deal of work has also been done on the impact of the "back to basics" movement and the resulting increase in graduation requirements on high school journalism programs. In many cases, journalism classes have been relegated to "elective" status, and colleges will no longer accept journalism as a course that fulfills English or Language Arts admission requirements. The most extensive materials are those prepared by Jack Dvorak and the Journalism Education Association Commission on the Role of Journalism in Secondary

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[30]Micala McMurrian, "Mo' Better Blues: A Case Study in Building Minority Participation in High School Publications" (Paper presented at the Mid-Winter Meeting of the Scholastic Journalism Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Atlanta, GA, January 1993).

[31]Mary Arnold and Njeri Fuller, eds., *Breakthrough: A Multicultural Guide to High School Journalism* (Iowa City: The University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication, May 1992) This entire publication is devoted to specific strategies for recruiting, training, and retaining student journalists in a multicultural environment. Virtually all are applicable to inner city students.

[32]See in particular Steve O'Donoghue's article "Journalism as a Dropout Prevention Program" and Robert Greenman's article "Removing Barriers to School Newspaper Staff Diversity" for specific suggestions for building student interest. *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, 26:1 (Fall 1992)

[33]See in particular Njeri Fuller's article "Why Diversity is Important to High School Publications" and Marcia Kovas' article "Making Diversity Count! A 10-Step Plan to Encourage Minority Involvement on Your Staff" for strategies to increase student interest. *Quill & Scroll*, 67:2 (December-January 1993).

Education.[34]

Two recent studies present a great deal of information about advisers – including adviser preparation and stipends. Both Jack Dvorak and Larry Lain have found that advisers are usually recruited after they are hired and have to learn "on the job" for limited financial compensation.[35] Dvorak has also found that the amount of compensation they receive is in no way commensurate with the amount of time spent, but that advisers – once they are on the job – truly enjoy and gain satisfaction from working with student publications.[36]

Lain has also investigated the ways that schools fund their newspapers from activity fees, subscriptions, sales, grants and advertising. He found that the most significant sources of funding are grants from the school administration and advertising.[37] Those who are

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[34]See Jack Dvorak, "Comparisons of College Grades, ACT Scores and High School Grades Between those With and those Without High School Newspaper and Yearbook Experience" (Paper presented at Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention in Norman, OK, 1986) and "College Student Attitudes Towards High School Journalism and Other Language Arts Experiences" (Paper presented at Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication convention in Portland, OR, 1988) and "High School Journalism Confronts Critical Deadline: A Report by the Journalism Education Association Commission on The Role of Journalism in Secondary Education," *Communication: Journalism Education Today*, 20:3 (Spring 1987).

[35]Laurence B. Lain, "A National Study of High School Newspaper Programs: Environmental and Adviser Characteristics, Funding and Pressures on Free Expression" (Paper presented at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual convention in Montreal, Canada, 1992).

[36]Jack Dvorak, "Job Satisfaction and Working Conditions of Today's High School Journalism Educator," Communication: Journalism Education Today, 26:3 (Spring, 1993) 2-5 and "Research Report: Secondary School Journalism in the United States," *Indiana High School Journalism Institute Insight*, April 1992.

[37]Laurence B. Lain, "A National Study of High School Newspaper Programs: A Preliminary Report" (Paper presented at the Mid-Winter Meeting of the Secondary Education Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Nashville, TN, January 1992) 17.

interested in the financial aspects of publication will find a great deal of information on school finances in Lain's two reports.

While the information presented thus far deals with those inner city high school newspapers that have stopped publishing, also of interest is how frequent do the schools that publish a newspaper do so? The findings from the current study are presented in Table 6 below.

Table 6: How Often Do (or Did) Schools Publish the Newspaper?

Response	*N Yes*	*All Schools % Yes*	*Stopped Publ* % Yes*
Daily	0	0	0
1 per week	4	3	0
2-3 per month	12	8	0
1 per month	30	20	42
6-8 per year	26	17	0
4-5 per year	57	38	47
Less than 4 per year	16	11	11
		N=149	N=19

When compared to the national figures for frequency of publication, some interesting differences appear. Larry Lain's 1992 national study of high school newspaper programs found that 86 percent of all public high schools publish a newspaper. This is very similar to the 85 percent in the current study of inner city schools. If one takes into account the number of papers that have folded in the last five years, it appears that before the recent decline, a greater percentage inner city schools were publishing newspapers than the national average. In fact, the recent decline in number of papers has just brought the number into line with national figures.

Lain also found that 50 percent of the high schools in his national study publish monthly. More than 27 percent of the newspapers publish fewer than six times a year.[38] Table 7 below compares Lain's

[38]Lain, Preliminary Report, 5.

results with the results of the current study.

Table 7: Inner City v. National Frequency of Publication

Frequency	*National** %	*Inner City* %
More Often than Monthly	22	11
Monthly	50	20
Less Often than Monthly	27	69

**Lain's 1992 National Study*

While about the same percentage of inner city schools publish newspapers, inner city schools publish their papers much less frequently than do high schools across the nation. In fact, almost 50 percent of them publish once a quarter or less frequently.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Do the results of this paper sound the death knell for the student newspaper? Faced with budget woes, tougher graduation requirements and a non-reading student body, are inner city student publications fading into oblivion? The answer is "no." There are real problems and some alarming trends, but the student newspaper is still alive in 85 percent of the nation's inner city schools. It would be very much overstating the case to say that the papers are healthy or thriving, since two thirds of them publish less than once a month and half of them publish once a quarter or less frequently. Such an infrequent publishing schedule makes for the oxymoron of "old news" that doesn't fit any criteria for the kind of information that vital newspapers present.

The most alarming concern is whether the trend of the last five years will continue. Since close to 90 percent of the papers that have shut down have done so in the last five years, another 135 or more newspapers could shut down in the next five. That would mean that about one-quarter of the students in inner city schools would not have the

opportunity to read or work on the newspaper in their home schools.

The nation's newspaper industry and the colleges and universities who seek to diversify their staffs and student bodies must continue to monitor inner city schools closely. However, just monitoring the nation's schools is not enough. Without some sort of help and support, most programs will continue to limp by providing "old news" to disinterested students.

Several different models are available for newspapers and universities to become involved with the inner city schools in their areas. These include dynamic programs like the Media Academy in Oakland, CA. The Media Academy, established in 1986, is a school-within-a-school program at Freemont High School in Oakland, CA, that operates with assistance from Oakland-area media. It is build around a program that emphasizes print and broadcast journalism careers. It is designed to answer the needs of students who are entering high school unmotivated, behind in credits, deficient in skills and who often have low expectations. Through journalism, students strengthen writing and verbal skills and gain a sense of self-worth by participating on the staff of a student newspaper, magazine or video production and in and summer and semester-long internships. The students who enter the program an average of two years behind grade level with a history of poor grades and attendance graduate with higher GPAs than their peers at Freemont and enter college at a rate above 90 percent per class.[39]

Another innovating model is the Detroit *Free Press* journalism program. Each of 20 Detroit high schools publishes a page in the *Free Press* once a month. For the past seven years once a week, 26,000 copies

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[39]Arnold and Fuller, *Breakthrough*, 23.

of the issue of the *Free Press* that contain the student newspapers are distributed to all of the participating high schools. Because printing costs are paid by an advertiser, there is no charge to the Detroit public schools. The *Free Press* pays the coordinator's salary and provides mentors, college scholarships, summer jobs and an apprenticeship program.[40]

A third model is the Journalist-in-Resident program for the Washington DC Public School System that is funded by the Freedom Forum. This new project provides a full-time journalist to work with the school district and help improve the high school journalism programs in Washington DC. During this first year, Retha Hill, the journalist-in-residence, is assessing district needs and helping district personnel seek funding for much-needed equipment, training and personnel.

These programs are just three examples of many different innovative approaches that other school districts and newspapers can emulate.[41] By the media and university journalism programs working with school districts, inner city programs can be revitalized and strengthened. Students will have the personal and educational opportunities that a vital high school journalism program affords. Just because the student newspapers in inner city schools are not dead yet doesn't mean that they don't need assistance and support. There is much that can and needs to be done. Big problems call for creative

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[40]Louise Ritchie, Free Press journalism program coordinator, during a presentation to the Journalism Education Association convention in Denver, April 1992.

[41]For more information about these programs contact Steve O'Donoghue, The Media Academy in Oakland, CA, (510) 534-4381; Matt Fiorito at the *Free Press* in Detroit, MI, (313)222-6400; and Retha Hill at the Office Of the Superintendent for the District of Columbia Schools, (202)724-4400.

solutions. The programs like the ones mentioned above are a first step toward reviving and restoring inner city high school student newspapers.

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Appendix A

Respondents versus Total Inner City Schools by State

Respondents			Inner City Schools		
State	*N*	%	*State*	*Total*	%
NY	29	18	CA	200	19
CA	29	18	NY	180	17
TX	21	13	TX	167	16
IL	13	8	IL	69	7
OH	8	5	FL	46	4
FL	6	4	OH	44	4
AZ	5	3	PA	34	2
RI	4	3	AZ	29	3
WA	4	3	MO	29	3
WI	4	3	KS	28	3
PA	2	1	MI	26	3
CO	2	1	WA	25	2
DC	2	1	GA	24	2
GA	3	2	LA	24	2
IN	2	1	MD	24	2
KS	2	1	NJ	24	2
LA	2	1	DC	22	2
MA	2	1	MA	18	2
MO	2	1	CO	16	1
MD	4	3	WI	12	1
MI	1	1	RI	11	1
MN	1	1	MN	10	1
NJ	1	1	IN	7	1
TOTAL	149	100%		1069	100%

February 5, 1993

Dear Principal,

We need your help. Those of us who are interested in high school journalism hear stories about how the student newspapers in the central metropolitan schools are dying. While we often hear stories about individual newspapers, no one has studied this issue on a national level. If there is a trend, we want to know about it and why it is happening.

Your school is one of a small number of high schools where principals are asked to supply information on this issue. Your school was drawn from a random sample of central metropolitan schools from the whole nation. In order that the results will truly represent the status of high school newspapers across the country, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned. Please take a minute and complete the one-page questionnaire and return it in the enclosed self-addressed business return envelope. You do not need to put a stamp on the envelope.

You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The questionnaire has an identification number for mailing purposes only. This is so that we may check your name off the mailing list when your questionnaire is returned. Your name will never be placed on the questionnaire unless you do it yourself.

The results of this research will be made available to journalism educators and people in the professional news media who are interested in high school journalism. You may receive a summary of the results by checking the appropriate place on the bottom of the form.

I would be most happy to answer any questions you might have. Please write or call. The telephone number is (319) 335-5833.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Project Director

ID# _____

SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS IN CENTRAL METROPOLITAN HIGH SCHOOLS

This survey is part of a national study about high school newspapers in central metropolitan schools. *All of your responses will be completely confidential.*

To answer each question mark an "X" in the appropriate space.

1. Does your school publish a student newspaper?

   ___ Yes
   ___ No

If you answered "yes" to question 1, go to question 5 — If you answered "no," go to question 2.

2. Did your school ever publish a student newspaper?

   ___ Yes
   ___ No

If you answered "yes" to question 2, go to question 3 — If you answered "no," you are finished with the survey.

3. When did your school stop publishing a student newspaper?

   ___ In the last 5 years
   ___ 5 to 10 years ago
   ___ Over 10 years ago
   ___ No records exist of when we stopped.

4. Why did your school stop publishing a student newspaper? *(check all that apply)*

   ___ Not enough student interest
   ___ Not enough students took this elective because of requirements for graduation
   ___ No faculty member was qualified to advise the newspaper
   ___ No faculty member was interested in advising the newspaper
   ___ Not enough funds to pay for the adviser's salary or stipend
   ___ Not enough funds to pay printing costs and equipment costs, etc.
   ___ Other: (please explain) _____

5. How often does (or did) your school publish its newspaper:

   ___ daily
   ___ 2 per week
   ___ 1 per week
   ___ 1 per month
   ___ 4-5 issues per year
   ___ 6-8 issues per year
   ___ Other: (please explain) _____

Other thoughts: Did the previous questions overlook something about why or why not your school publishes a student newspaper?

Optional Information:

___*Check here if you would like a copy of the research summary when it is completed.*

Name of the school newspaper adviser: _____

Your name: _____

School: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Thank you for participating in this survey. Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided.